

[The Times](#) of London, Aug. 8, 1996

So what's new, shrug the watchers on ET Highway

AT THE Little A-Le-Inn on Nevada's Extraterrestrial Highway, news of life on Mars was greeted not so much with excitement as with interplanetary ennui.

"Oh, really, they got proof now?" yawned Paula Clayton, proprietor of the only hostelry on route 375 through the hostile desert north of Las Vegas. "That was pretty much assumed round here. We are not alone."

Route 375, which used to be one of the loneliest roads in America, was officially designated ET Highway earlier this year and is to be adorned with signs welcoming passing aliens. Business at Mrs Clayton's motel, a UFO-watcher's Mecca in the village of Rachel, has gone "completely crazy" since the road was renamed, though she and her customers were unaware of the news from Nasa's Martian rock experts until alerted to it by *The Times*.

Pushed on the subject, the inkeeper admitted word of fossilised microbes from Mars would "start a buzz in the UFO community". But the received wisdom among the conspiracy theorists and amateur astronomers who flock here is that alien creatures and craft are already the subject of a massive 40-year US Government cover-up.

An extraterrestrial spacecraft crashed to earth at Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947 and has been stored ever since in a vault beneath 'Area 51', a secret Pentagon facility within the Nellis nuclear test range near Rachel, UFO enthusiasts fervently believe.

A gathering of 4,000 is expected in Rachel later this month to demand the opening to the public of Area 51, whose existence the Government acknowledged for the first time last year. That, says Mrs Clayton, is where to find the little green men.

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